

CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

CUMTUX



Vol. 14, No. 1 - Winter, 1994



MYRTLE SLANGER - NEHALEM VALLEY HISTORIAN

Myrtle Slinger at the site of the Spruce Run School at the old Yunker and Wicks Logging Camp, where she taught for three years.

This issue of *Cumtux* owes much to two people, Myrtle Slinger and Helen Gaston. Both have a deep interest in people, history, and education. Myrtle Slinger is the historian of the Nehalem Valley and one of the "Living Treasures" of Clatsop County. Through her articles in the *Seaside Signal*, she has shared with her readers her love of the history and people of this valley.

Riding all over the countryside with Myrtle Slinger, Helen Gaston, and Oney Camberg to interview Nehalem Valley residents and see the landmarks has been a joy. We learned that there are many other families in this valley whose stories should have been told. We look forward to gathering more reminiscences, letters and diaries of the Nehalem Valley for other issues in the future. We hope that this issue will inspire others to share their knowledge of Clatsop County history.

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CUMTUX

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Cover: The Tim Corcoran Sr. homestead on
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the woman (probably Nellie Corcoran
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Astoria Printing Co.**

*CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:
"To know...acknowledge...to inform"*

The Nehalem Valley

ONE GOES "TO" SEASIDE or goes "to" Gray's River, but one never goes "to" the Nehalem Valley. One goes "into" the Nehalem. When in the valley, one goes "out." This relic of pioneer speech, according to Edward E. Gray, in an article, titled, "The Gem Valley of Oregon," from the *Morning Astorian* of August 1, 1911, shows respect for the difficulties encountered on the journey to this fertile valley. The Nehalem River itself commands respect, springing from high in the Coast Mountain Range, flowing placidly in one location, and roaring over huge boulders in another, through the counties of northwest Oregon: Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook where it reaches the sea. Dense forests hemmed in the river, denying access to

all but the hardiest of pioneers, until the muddy paths were paved with asphalt all the way from Astoria and Seaside to Portland. In the spring of 1938, the road was finally completed. Known first as Wolf Creek Highway, eight years later it was renamed "the Sunset Highway." It takes less than an hour now to travel from Astoria or Seaside to the pioneer cemetery at Elsie, where we may visit the graves of Hans and Mary Anderson, who were among the earliest settlers of the valley. There, too, and at the Jewell Cemetery, are the graves of Robert Wherry; Timothy and Julia Corcoran; Gustav, Ben, Phyllis, and Henry Gronnel; the Jacobsons; the Popes; the Riersons; the Smiths, the Fosters and other pioneers whose stories appear in the pages of this issue of *Cumtux*. ♦



CCHS Photo #5556-187

The beautiful Nehalem River flows past the farms of Dan Rierson on the left and Andrew Olson on the right.

Reminiscence of a Pioneer

By John Robert Wherry

T HIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY printed in the Morning Astorian newspaper on May 20, 1928 on page 8. It has been edited for clarity.

The pioneers who settled this valley up to the present century had the same spirit of adventure and suffered the same hardships as those who first made their way to the Western Shore. How little does the driver of a high speeding car know or care what the pathfinders did to make the roads he uses, with one moment here, the next out of sight, and in one hour, perhaps, eating up more distance than two days behind a pack train or an ox team. Only a few years ago, the usual way to travel was for a man to walk with a forty pound pack on his back, and an axe to hew his way through brush and fallen timber. With a horse and pack and a diamond hitch, sometimes fifteen miles could be made in a day. Wagons needed roads to make the trip and we had no roads worthy of the name. The result was that few could or would make the journey there.

Long before the modern road, we had the military road which was conceived by "Fighting" Joseph Hooker to get troops to the mouth of the Columbia River in case a hostile fleet should try to capture Astoria. This road started from Upper Astoria and ran from hill to mountain, and one wit on the clerical force said if they missed any hills, they were sorry for it. It was little help to the Nehalem Valley settler. The early trails were made by the old pioneers, who got more work done for a dollar than can be done now for ten. So wild

was the area that these old trails were often used by criminals, even murderers, to get away from the law.

To get across the south fork of the Klaskanine, a unique bridge was made by falling a spruce tree across the river and adzing a face on top, boring auger holes and boarding up the sides. This bridge was narrow, but not much narrower than the trail was.

Supplies were brought up on the river as far as possible, and were secured largely in the summer and before the winter rains started, though we didn't always make it in time. Canoes were common on the river and one of the pea-pod type was sawed in two and used for a coffin later. Scows were built and floated downstream and then sometimes broken up and the wood used to build houses for homesteaders.

Only J. Fenimore Cooper could describe the impressive scenes that the pioneers viewed, the large majestic buck elk at bay in his proud maneuvers and his quick pitches after the dog or wolf, or the mother elk fighting a cougar in defense of her calf. We often found playgrounds where the elk would gather. They destroyed the vegetation in what looked like a large circus ring. The center was pounded flat and the edge of the ring was banked up three feet high in some places.

On one of the bluffs near the military road in the area of Saddle Mountain, called Swallalahost by the Indians, was a bluff the wolves used to kill elk.

They would corral a band of elk onto the bluff and force some of them over it and into Destruction Creek. There was only one way to get in and out of the trap. This was in Section 34, Township 5 North, Range 8 West. The skulls and bones are there yet. Wolves were numerous and sometimes followed the trails or roads for fifteen miles, but although they scared some people, they seldom bothered stock, but killed elk instead. One time the writer shooed off a band of perhaps four wolves and took the hindquarters of the elk out of the water and away from the pack.

Bears sometimes stole the honey in the door yard and caught hogs and sheep. Cougars were unsociable but have done some harm, leaping on the dogs like a cat with a mouse and killing them. They generally run for a tree, however, and many have been killed. We used to get a substantial bounty for their scalps.

Fires often raged in the forest in the dry season, sweeping over miles of tree-tops in a few hours and doing immense damage. The ones who did the burning hardly realized the damage done.

The earliest settler on the Nehalem was at Tidewater in Tillamook County. The earliest settler in Clatsop County was a Mr. Beal, who in 1865 settled where the military road crossed the Nehalem River. The few who settled before 1873 were nearly all old 1849 and 1852 gold seekers. They were men who were always glad to help a neighbor or a stranger. These pioneers generally wore pack sacks on their backs and belts around their waists in which they wore butcher knives. They were sometimes rough in their language, but kind-hearted and true to a friend.

The first home of a settler was

sometimes made from a tree. An overgrown yellow fir tree with the rotten wood dug out from the trunk might serve for a month or so. One man sawed off a large hollow cedar tree three stories high, roofed over the top, used the upper story for storerooms and the lower for his bed. To keep warm, a fire was built in front of the opening.

The houses were generally built of split cedar. They were lined and ceiled with shaved boards, split and fitted, and then roofed. The roof was weighted to hold the shakes in place. No nails were used in its construction. Even wood hinges and pins were used for the doors. Some houses were partly dug into a bank. Chimneys were made of sticks and mud with stone for a fireback. Stoves were not to be found in the Nehalem Valley in those days, and instead, cooking was done in the fire-place. A handy attachment in the chimney was used for hanging kettles, and fire dogs were used to hold up the wood. The bachelor who could not turn a cake from a frying pan with the proper twist of his wrist was not to be allowed in the best society.

While Mr. Edison in his laboratory was perfecting the incandescent light, the boys in the western timber were learning to carry their "indecent" light of split-pitch so as to keep it ablaze while shining in the deer's eyes or spearing salmon.

The tools we used were handmade. The pioneer housewives can remember when they made brooms out of a large hazel stripped from the end and wired, then stripped from the handle and bound below the bulge. Half a log was adzed to use as a container for tan bark for elk and beef hides, so father could make shoes. Old ox yokes and whip saws and some other relics can still be found in the valley.



CCHS Photo #89.187.41

These hunters in the Elsie area organized to wipe out wildcats, bears and wolves about 1915.

Ground or brush was slashed in May and June, burned in August and with a grub hoe, dug up and sowed to wheat in September, cut with a reap hook, threshed with a flail, winded and cleaned, ground in a large coffee mill and made into Dolly Varden bread, whole wheat, if you please, and not bad if you liked it. There was elk, deer and beaver, sometimes, with salmon and potatoes in season. Sometimes parched wheat, chicory, etc. were used as a substitute for coffee. Indian hunters in the summer killed elk and all the settlers had dried salmon, venison and elk. The Justices of Peace went out to kill elk out of season so as to disqualify themselves from sitting in judgment on their neighbors. We hunted with old muzzle-loaders, guns with ball and powder and caps, sometimes a Kentucky rifle with an extra long barrel. Daniel Boone used a similar weapon.

For fruit we had the wild crabapple tree which furnished the parent stock for two or more varieties of apples,

hastening the time until the young orchard came into bearing.

The garden had to be protected from the chickens. Some inventive genius tied rags over the chickens' feet while some other, not to be outdone, mashed the hens' toes with a hammer so that they could not scratch the garden. But the climax was reached with a stiff wire that was put in a coil about the legs of the chicken and had a sharpened end which was bent so that when the hen tried to kick back, she stuck in the ground and kicked herself out of the garden. Other inventions unpatented might be mentioned.

Heroines there were, to be sure. One lady, the mother of three, went to Astoria and worked for \$20.00 per month to earn money to buy clothes and groceries so the father could clear land and build a home. One mother of eight children carried the mail forty miles and back three times per week through mud and snow at all seasons and did it well

and she raised her children without a father's help. Some women knew how to kill deer, wild cats and shoot hawks and other birds, catch fish and also stayed home and made a garden, milk cows and take care of the home while the men were catching salmon on the Columbia or working in logging camps. Quite a contrast to the vapid dolls who just live from one dance to another and spend half their time riding and the other half playing bridge.

Doctors were seldom called in the early days, but wounded and sick people were carried on stretchers thirty miles to save a life or have a leg cut off. Camp meetings were held in a grove. The log school houses had homemade desks and seats built principally by bachelors and the boys, with married men for helpers. Teachers were paid \$100 for three months teaching.

The first mail carrier on the route between Astoria and Forest Grove was Eben P. Parker of Astoria. H.B. Parker, his father, was the contractor in 1873. There was a weekly round trip to Forest Grove and back over the military road. Mishawaka was the point for distributing the mail. For twenty years, the railroad held a strip from Astoria to an outside connection, but this was finally forfeited by an act of Congress. Railroad surveys were periodical and cheered up the flagging hopes of the settlers.

Some pioneer may be able to add much to what I can remember, but this may interest some. ♦



CCHS Photo #5552-187

The old Jewell Schoolhouse

John Robert Wherry was born October 9, 1862 in Marshalltown, Iowa, to Wyatt and Rowena Hill Wherry. He came to Oregon in 1866, residing first in Eola, Polk County. He died June 9, 1940 at Elsie and was buried in the Elsie Cemetery near his home. He was married twice, first to Nelly Jones, then to Elizabeth Jane McKeever Larsen, another Nehalem Valley pioneer who was born January 28, 1875 in San Francisco, California and died May 4, 1942. J.R. Wherry's father, Wyatt Wherry, settled on his homestead claim in the Nehalem Valley on October 28, 1872 and proved up on it fourteen years later.

The man, Beal, referred to as the first settler in the Nehalem Valley, was Thomas W. Beal who was born about 1830 in Virginia. He was listed on the 1850 census in the Clatsop Plains area. In 1860, he was trying to sell a tract of land on the Nehalem River, according to one source.

The 1850 and 1860 censuses for Clatsop County are on sale at the Heritage Museum.

Hans Anderson: Clatsop County's First Norwegian

By Liisa Penner

MYSTERY STILL SURROUNDS the early years of Hans Anderson and his wife, Mary. Leitha Trefren of Medford, Oregon, whose husband, Ed, is descended from this couple, contacted the Clatsop County Genealogy Society to see if members could add to her knowledge of this family's history. The following is a result of our combined research.

The membership history of the Nidaros Lodge No. 16 of the Sons of Norway, published in Astoria in 1960, contains this statement: "The records show the first Norwegian arrived here from California in about 1850. His name was Hans Andersen. He took an Indian woman for his wife, and according to his granddaughter, settled first in Olney and then in 1866 moved to the upper Nehalem Valley, to become the first white settler there."

Hans Anderson (his last name was usually spelled with an "o") came from Egersund, Rogaland, Norway. Whether he was also born there is still uncertain. His family there has not yet been identified in the church records because his name is a common one, and because we do not know the exact date of his birth. We are not even certain about the year, but believe it to have been about 1829. From donation land claim records, we have learned that Hans Anderson came to the United States in August of 1850, arriving at the Port of New York when he was about twenty-one years old. He made his way to California sometime afterwards, then

landed on Oregon Territory on September 16, 1852. He declared his intent to become a citizen in Lewis County, O.T., then settled on his donation land claim on Youngs River in Clatsop County on May 26, 1853. With more research, someday we may learn what impelled him to leave his home in Norway. Perhaps, like Clatsop County's first Finn, Charles Newman, he was a sailor who was attracted by the prospect of owning free land. The property he chose first was a beautiful site, part of which is now owned by Toivo and Shirley Elfving Mustonen. As described by the tax records, it was bounded on the north by the Klaskanine Creek, on the east and south by vacant land, and on the west by Youngs River. It was located in Sections 14 and 15 in Township 7 North, Range 9 West and consisted of 157.92 acres. By 1859, the land and improvements were valued at \$300 and the taxes were \$3.70 which included \$1.00 poll tax. The 1860 census lists Hans Anderson as a 31-year old single man who owned \$250 worth of real property (land) and \$100 worth of personal property (probably a cow and a horse.)

About 1864 to 1865, Hans Anderson met and married, Mary, a woman of twenty-four or twenty-five. She was described in an affidavit signed by her son-in-law, James Brewer, in Yamhill County about 1930, as follows:

I, J.W. Brewer, being duly sworn, say that I am now 72 years of age, that I was one time married to Minnie

Anderson, now deceased, a daughter of Hans Anderson and Mary Anderson, an Indian woman....I say further that I was acquainted with Mary Anderson, an Indian woman, the mother of my said wife, for five years prior to her death on the 4th day of March 1887, that I well remember that she had three horizontal parallel dotted lines tattooed on each cheek, which all who knew her understood to be the ... marks of the tribe to which she belonged..

According to the census, Mary was born in British Columbia and belonged to the "Nimo" tribe. The death certificate of her daughter, Rhoda Bullay, lists her mother's maiden name as Mary Jones. The story handed down in the Brewer family is that Mary was first married to Doctor Coe, an Englishman. Further information about Mary's history is certain to lie in documents, somewhere, waiting to be found.

The marriage of Hans and Mary Anderson apparently did not take place in Clatsop County as it did not appear in the local records. Marriages in those early years were not always recorded, however. Hans and Mary Anderson named their first child, Astor, appropriate, perhaps, considering the important historical role this small family was to play. Astor was born in 1865 while the family was still living on their donation land claim on Youngs River. Mrs. Frank Wooden, whose maiden name was Josephine Carl, recalled this family in an undated newspaper article in one of the scrapbooks of the Nehalem Valley Pioneer Association at Myrtle Slinger's home.

In 1866, a hardier man brought his family to homestead in the same spot as Beal (where the old military road crosses the Nehalem). This was Hans

Anderson, a Norwegian whose wife was one hundred percent Indian. They brought their small son, Astor, and settled down [in the Nehalem Valley] two years before any others. Hans Anderson brought his family by ox sled from Olney, a trip of less than twenty miles which took a week. The crossing of the road and river came to be called Mishawaka....

Move to the Nehalem Valley

Hans Anderson and his family left their donation land claim on the Youngs River for a pre-emption claim of what was estimated to be 160 acres, on the Nehalem River in Sections 32 and 33 in Township 5 North, Range 7 West. He later paid the federal government \$1.25 an acre for 143.02 acres. The agricultural schedule of the 1870 census shows that he had cleared eight acres in those four years, with the rest still woodland. The total value of his farm then was \$1200. He also had \$10 worth of tools, five milk cows, two oxen, four cattle, and one pig. In that census year, he raised \$20 worth of produce and 400 bushels of Irish potatoes. He made 150 pounds of butter and two tons of hay. Four years later, he had thirty cows, one horse and some hogs.

The Anderson family experimented with other farm products. Near the end of October in 1874, Astorians were startled to see Hans Anderson leading a tame elk into town from his Nehalem Valley home. He offered this family pet to anyone who would treat it kindly. He found a buyer, G. W. Lamb, the village blacksmith, who pastured it on the grounds of the Columbia Brewery Park, an area that was also known as "Spooney Lane." In the spring of the next year, the elk boarded the ship Ajax for California. In February of 1878, a newspaper article mentioned that Hans Anderson in the Nehalem Valley "has raised some of the finest tobacco for cigar work that can be found. It is of

good flavor, free from stems, and cigar makers ought to see it...." Two weeks later, another article reported that, "We are informed that Hans Anderson raised a splendid crop of cereals on his Mishawaka place in Nehalem last season. This will go far to prove that portion of Clatsop is worthy of the attention of settlers." A flood of settlers followed the Andersons into the valley, quickly taking up all the available land along the Nehalem River in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1870, on January 3, Hans A. Anderson applied to the commissioners of Clatsop County for a permit to operate a ferry on the Nehalem River to help the early settlers locate their claims and move their goods.

The cabin (shown below) that Hans Anderson built on the homestead was a small one, 16' by 22', a one story building with board roof and floor, with two windows and four doors. He also built a 40' by 50' barn and other outbuildings. In 1878 when the Mishawaka Voting Precinct was created, this cabin (described as being near the school) was chosen as the

voting place.

It was a difficult trip to make on foot from the Nehalem Valley, but compounding this was the impediment to traffic placed by William H. Gray on the road. In the July 18, 1874 issue of the *Weekly Astorian*, the Editor D.C. Ireland noted, "Seeing Hans Anderson in town a few days ago, we were curious to know how he got in--- and we were informed that he climbed the fence at the Klaskanine Farm." For more on the problems building the road to the Nehalem Valley, see Joyce Morrell's article in the Spring, 1990 issue of *Cumtux*.

Three more children were born to Hans and Mary Anderson at their Mishawaka home: Nathan, Rhoda and Minnie.

Death of Hans Anderson

On Wednesday, May 24, 1893, the *Astoria Daily Budget* informed its readers that "Hans Anderson, the first settler in the Nehalem Valley and an old Oregon pioneer, died last Saturday and was buried Sunday. The deceased was



73 years of age and leaves a family of four children." His wife, Mary, had died six years before. This couple was buried at the Elsie Cemetery where headstones still stand to mark their graves.

Astor A. Anderson

Astor Anderson, who was born on January 10, 1865 on the Youngs River donation land claim, worked in farming and logging. In 1888, he was working as the constable at Jewell. He proved up on his own pre-emption land claim in 1891 in the Nehalem Valley. Then, for a time, he lived in Astoria. A few years later he was working as postmaster at Jewell which led to considerable difficulty for him. The *Astoria Daily Budget* on August 3, 1912 reported that "Astor A. Anderson, postmaster at Jewell was arrested yesterday afternoon by Deputy United States Marshal McSwain on a charge of being \$1137 short in his accounts with the government, and last evening, he was taken to Portland for trial before the federal judge." Two months later, Astor Anderson pleaded guilty before Judge Bean, of the federal court in Portland, to the charge of appropriating \$1134 of the postal funds. He admitted that he had dipped into the post office money to subsidize his gambling in card games that were held at the Jewell store, and admitted also that he had kept no books or accounts. He asked for leniency considering his ignorance and lack of education. Astor Anderson was, however, sentenced to thirteen months at McNeil Island Penitentiary. After his release from prison, he returned to the valley, working as a farmer and logger.

In 1925, he was married to Martha Johnson Reierson, a 28-year old widow who had six children to raise after her husband, Andrew Reierson, died in December, 1917, at the age of 65. Reierson was a pioneer who, along with his brothers, Julius and Dan, had lived

in the valley for 35 years.

Astor Anderson spent the rest of his life in Clatsop County and died in January of 1948, survived by his wife, Martha, and three step-sons, Henry, Robert, and Julius Rierson of Elsie and one step-daughter, Helen Tiffany of Richmond, California. He is buried at Elsie Cemetery near his parents.

Nathan Anderson

Nathan Anderson was born in 1869 in the Nehalem Valley, where he also attended school. He was married to Christine Nelson, a Dane, in 1893. Their marriage was the 313th in that year. The two are listed together without children on the 1900 and 1910 census, living in the Nehalem Valley where Nathan farmed his own land. The 304th marriage in that same year was that of Albert William Smith and Laura Ada Pope, long time neighbors of the Andersons with whom their lives were to be forever intertwined. Laura Ada and Nathan had been childhood sweethearts according to Betty Jean Oden Nunes, Laura Ada's granddaughter. But because Nathan was part Indian, she was not allowed to marry him. According to Betty Jean, her parents "made" her marry Albert William Smith, by whom she had four children, Perry Donald, Frank Albert, Nelly Emeline, and Ada Mildred (Betty Jean's mother). Their prohibition against marriage with this family had ironic consequences, as unions took place in two succeeding generations. See the genealogy chart following this article.

The Andersons, Smiths, and other Nehalem Valley settlers worked hard and also entertained with a zest that is seldom seen today. An article from the newspaper from March, 1909 described a typical party at Nathan and Christine's home:

A card party and dance was given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Nate Anderson, Monday evening, and was attended by a large party of their friends and neighbors. Card playing was indulged in until 12 midnight, after which Nate brought out the gramophone, and the festivities continued until daylight. The various guests all report having had a good time.

Nineteen years after the Andersons and the Smiths were married, Nathan Anderson and Laura Ada Smith eloped, moving to Butte Falls in the Siskyou Mountains, near Medford. According to Betty Jean Nunes, Laura Ada had earlier had left an unhappy marriage and moved to Portland to work. She met Nate Anderson on her way to Butte Falls. They remained in the southern Oregon area the rest of their lives. With them at first were the four Smith children, but Perry and Frank returned to the Nehalem Valley and their descendants still reside there. Nelly and Mildred remained in Southern Oregon, attending school in a one-room cabin, walking each day past the graves of five early pioneers who had been killed by Indians. Two children were born to Laura Ada and Nathan: Dessie and Irene Anderson. Years later, Irene came to the Nehalem Valley to live not far from where her parents and grandparents pioneered. A terrible accident in April, 1958, on "Suicide Curve," about eight miles south of Astoria, claimed her life and that of her husband, Jack E. Wood. Dessie Anderson, married William Cummings, and is still alive in Eureka, California. Nathan Anderson died March 19, 1936 at the home of his daughter, Dessie. Laura Ada Smith Anderson, had left him five years previously and married Charles Blain Pennington. She died January 8, 1965. Nathan and Laura Ada are both buried in Jackson County,

Oregon, as was her first husband, Albert William Smith.

Rhoda Anderson Jacobson Bullay

The third child of Hans and Mary Anderson was Rhoda, who was born at Elsie on October 19, 1869. Her descendants lived, too, in Clatsop and Jackson Counties, before moving on. Some still live in the Nehalem Valley. In 1887, Rhoda Anderson married Ole M. Jacobson, a Norwegian like her father, who was born in Id, Ostfold County, Norway, on June 7, 1851. Ole's parents were Jacob Anderson and Anne Christine Johannesdotter. (From the naming pattern formerly in use in Scandinavia and elsewhere, it can be assumed that Ole had one grandfather named Anders, and another, Johan.) The family story is that Ole M. Jacobson was a sailor who had jumped ship, possibly in Portland about 1881. He took out a homestead claim, too, not far from that of his father-in-law, Hans Anderson. Ole and Rhoda were active in the community, serving as officers on the Elsie school board; their children made up a large portion of the school. Rhoda and Ole were divorced about 1915. An index of farmers in 1915 shows that she owned 90 acres in Sections 4 and 5 in Township 4 North, Range 7 West and 53 acres in Sections 32 and 33 in Township 5 North, Range 7 West. She continued to live on the old homestead where she was born until 1918, when she moved to Astoria. She rented the farm out for a time to her son, Carl Oscar Jacobson. In 1922, she returned to her old home. She was still living in Elsie in 1925, raising cattle, according to another farmers' index. That same year, Rhoda Anderson Jacobson married Arthur B. Bullay whose photograph appears inside the front cover of the Winter, 1991 issue of *Cumtux*. Her ex-husband, Ole M. Jacobson, remained in Clatsop County for a while. He died on January 16,

1932 and was buried in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Maxine Gaither Barrick of Astoria remembers, as a child in the 1930s, when her father would take the whole family out in a Model T Ford to spend two weeks in the summer visiting her grandfather, Arthur Bullay at the farm in the Nehalem Valley. She recalls that her grandfather and the Jacobson boys operated a sawmill on the Nehalem River and raised pigs for market. They lived in a large two story house. The Sunset Highway now goes right through the spot where the house stood. Rhoda and Arthur Bullay moved to Dundee, Oregon, in 1930 and she died there on July 27, 1938. She is buried at the Rose City Cemetery in Portland. Her obituary states that, "Her life was one of kindly service to all who knew her, a true mother, an exemplary wife and a good neighbor."

Rhoda and Ole M. Jacobson had eight children, of whom all but one survived to maturity. They were: Martha Christina, born in March, 1887, and married in 1905 to William Edwin Willeberg, a cigar-maker in Astoria. She died childless in 1912 and was buried at Elsie. Carl Oscar was born in August, 1888. He was still alive in 1953. Louie Andres was born on October 9, 1890 at Elsie. He served as a private in the 63 Spruce Squadron in World War I. He is buried at the Elsie Cemetery. Mary Helena was born December 31, 1891. She married Robert L. Pope in 1911, the second generation of the Anderson family to marry into the Pope family. She died in 1983 and is also buried at the Elsie Cemetery. Her children were Robert F. Pope of Elsie and Gordon G. Pope who died in San Diego, California, in 1987. The only evidence for the existence of the next child of Ole and Rhoda is the headstone in the Elsie Cemetery of a

Jacobson baby who died in 1894. The next child, Albert Martin (Pete) Jacobson, was the father of Leitha Trefen's husband. He was born in December of 1897. The next child was William H. who was born in 1906 and was living in Payette, Washington in 1953. The last child was Eldred S. Jacobson, who was born in 1910 and died in Shelton, Washington, in 1980.

Minnie Anderson Brewer

The youngest child of Hans and Mary Anderson was Minnie who was born in April, 1872, at Elsie. She married James Brewer about 1891. At the time of her father's death in 1893, she was living in Scappoose. Seven years later, she was back in Clatsop County, living in Fernhill. Her husband, James Brewer, was born in England in November, 1858, according to the 1900 federal census. His occupation was logging. Three of their five children were listed on this census, ranging in ages from 2 to 10. Information from the Brewer family gives their children as: Ethel, born April, 1892, Inez, born March, 1894, Edith, born about 1896, George, born in August, 1899, and James M. Brewer, born in 1904. Minnie Anderson Brewer died in August, 1929 at Canby, Oregon.

The only reference to this family in the newspaper index at the Astoria Public Library was in the August 27, 1904 issue of the *Astoria Daily Budget*. This paper contained a report of an altercation that may have been related to racial comments made about the youngest daughter of Hans and Mary Anderson. According to this article, James Brewer, and his friend, John Adams, and their families had been in Astoria to see the Regatta. After a day of celebrating, they started home on the evening train. Both men were intoxicated by the time they got off the train at Brewer's house where they may

have intended to continue to celebrate. Earlier in the afternoon, Brewer had taken offense from a remark another man had made about his wife. He blamed Adams for not giving him his gun to shoot the man, and the more he thought about it, the more agitated he became. When he got to his house, Brewer grabbed his old Winchester pump rifle and, determined to do some damage to someone, took off after Adams, who he discovered hiding in brush near the railroad track. Adams, in self-defense, shot the approaching Brewer in the right thigh and knee. After several misfires, Brewer finally got a shot off, sending a charge of No. 6 shot into Adams' right side. Mrs. Adams grabbed Brewer's rifle and tried to get it away from him before he could shoot again. Several on-lookers then subdued him. Adams' life was saved by a copy of the *Budget* which was folded up in his vest pocket. Both men

suffered only minor injuries.

James W. Brewer, his wife, Minnie and their children left Clatsop County, perhaps for Yamhill County, the same county where Rhoda Anderson Bullay spent her last years. ♦

Leitha Trefren's research into her husband's family history has produced many surprising stories. She says that her husband, Eddie, finds these most enjoyable, and has encouraged her to continue her research. His Indian heritage has become a source of pride and deep curiosity. Leitha began writing to Indian tribal organizations in British Columbia in an effort to learn more about Mary Anderson. She said she has "one down, and about two hundred more to go."



Courtesy of Leitha Trefren
The Ole Jacobson Family. Left to right: Carl Oscar, Louis Andres, Ole Martin, Rhoda Anderson, Mary Helena, Martha Christina, and Albert Martin.

Genealogy of the Hans Anderson Family

Hans Anderson

born 1820 Rogaland ?, Norway

married Mary, date ?

died May 20, 1893

buried at Elsie Cemetery

Mary (a Nimo Indian)

born 1840 British Columbia

married 1st, Dr. Coe

died March 4, 1889

buried at Elsie Cemetery

Children:

Astor A.

b 1865 Youngs R.

m Martha Johnson

Reierson

d 1948

Nathan

b 1867 Elsie

m 1. Christina

Nelson

2. Laura Pope

Smith

d 1936 Jackson Co.

OR

Rhoda

b 1869 Elsie

m 1. Ole M.

Jacobson

2. Arthur B.

Bullay

d 1938

Dundee OR

Minnie

b 1872 Elsie

m James W.

Brewer

d 1920

Canby OR

children:

Reierson

Step-children:

1. Henry

2. Helen

3. Robert

4. Julius

children:

1. Irene A.

b 1916

m Jack E. Wood

d 1958 Warrenton

2. Dessie

m Wm. Cummings

Still alive

Smith

Step-children:

1. Perry Donald

2. Frank Albert

3. Nelly Emeline

4. Ada Mildred

children:

1. Martha Christina

b 1887

m Wm. Willeberg

d 1912

2. Carl Oscar

b 1888

3. Louie Andres

b 1890

d 1953

4. Mary Helena

b 1891

m Robt. L. Pope

d 1983

5. Baby

d 1894

6. Albert Martin (Pete)

b 1897

7. William Howard

b 1906

8. Eldred Stanley

b 1910

d 1980

children:

1. Ethel 1892

2. Inez 1894

3. Edith 1886

4. George

1899

5. James M.

1904

d after 1953

Letters from the Nehalem Valley

WILD AND DOMESTICATED animals could create havoc for the early settlers as the following letters show. The first is by Anna Carlotta (Nelson) Parker who wrote to her husband, Abraham Lincoln (Linc) Parker. Their story is told in the Winter 1990 issue of Cumtux by their grandson, Lawrence V. Parker, who shared her letter with us. He noted that his grandfather treasured this letter so much that he still had it in his possession when he died over 50 years later. Lawrence Parker describes the scene as follows:

"They lived on a homestead 3 miles from Jewell where Linc built a log cabin. My grandmother, Anna Parker, a Danish immigrant, was only about 18 years old when she wrote this letter. She had been married to Linc about 18 to 20 months and had one child, Jenner. Apparently Linc went to Astoria and intended coming home by the week end. When his return was delayed, he sent a note to his wife by a neighbor (Hall). My grandmother was frantic. She was living in the wilderness, no phones, no cars, only horse trails, and probably the nearest neighbor a mile away. To make matters worse, the pigs broke down the fences three times. And she was trying to keep the garden growing. The baby cried until he was sick and then she got sick. She was a real brave gal with much pioneer spirit. She called the baby (Jenner) "pet." This letter is somewhat of a love letter, telling Linc how bad things are going, she misses him, and she wants him to come home soon."

Some punctuation has been added but

the spelling is unchanged.

Jewell, June the 16th 1887

Dear Darling Husband:

As Hall is out here and I expect him to come up, I will just send a few lines with him to you & tell you how bad we are getting along and I am feeling very, very bad to hear that you ere not a coming home this week. The same day that you left the old sow broke the gate down and 4 big hogs got in the field but I got them out again and tied the gate. Then I went in the house and got the baby & went out & when I got outside again, old Lena was out in the field again. Then i got her out and tied the gate 2 places & went in the shop & got more rope, but when I got out again, Lena broke the gate down again & got in so I hath to lai the baby down by the house and run, for Lena began on the pear very nice. Then I run the other pigs away & got after her & if she did not run all over to field & me after her & Jenner a crying himself sick but she got out & I tied the gate with all the rope I could find in the house but I was sick all day. The next day old Sam came up & began to tare the fence down, so I had to go down after Fertado & he came up after his mule. Bill brought the plow back & Mrs Thomason came up to me on Sunday. Monday Lizzie was here & Mrs. O'Conner. I have been baking for p[?]y day since Sunday but gave it up today & am very sorry. Jenner is a bigger pet than ever. He holler for papa. He can call the cows for me but will not let me work in the garden vary long. I got the turnips and beats transplanted & a bed made for parsnips & potatoes hilled

outside the house & will begin on the other once to morrow or next day. Will you bring some paper & envelopes & pen & some safetypins when you come out. Come as soon as you can. Mrs. Newton Foster got twins again, 2 girls.

Goodby & a kiss from me & pet. Don't be angry for me writing to you but I feel so lonesome & if it hath not been for Jenner, you would not see any sow when you got for home for I would have taken her head off.

Get me big sewing needles No. 4. Get me some cornstarch & bleach.

Letter from Nancy Foster

Nancy J. (Hubbard) Foster is the author of the following letter, a copy of which was given to us by Ed Parker, a grandson of Gelo Parker and a distant cousin of Lawrence Parker mentioned above. Isaac Newton and William Foster were brothers who applied for homestead grants in June of 1879 in Section 12, Township 5 North, Range 7 West, near present-day Jewell. George and Ernest Foster are descendants who live in the valley today.

Jewell, Sept. 1st 1887

Mr. G.T. Parker

Dear Friend:

As my good man wanted me to write to you, I hope Mrs. Parker won't feel jealous. All are as well as usual and hope this will find all three of you well. Times are dull out here. The potato crop is very light but we have quite a nice lot of apples and you will remember our black berry vine; it is just as full as it can be, and we have a nice lot of as fine honey as ever you saw.

The friends out here are all well. Mr.

Foster has gone to the landing to day. He still packs. I often ask myself the question: will we ever have a road so we can drive to town? I sometimes think never, but still hope for the better. Newty is working at Mr Walkers and has been all summer. I wish every Mother had as good boy as mine is.

Eli is now large enough to help do chores. He can milk and cut wood. He speaks of you every nice apple he gets and wishes you had it.

Yesterday evening when I was going to get supper, I went to the well for water when my Turkeys and chickens came running from the barn and on looking up, to my great surprise, there came a large Panther after them. It ran them within 20 steps of the door and me howling all the time which brought the good man and Mr. Mekers out of the field. By this time it had turned and crossed the fence and gone in the woods. Our faithful dog took the track and in a few moments had him treed. The men took the guns and killed it not over 2 hundred yards from the barn. It measured 6 feet from tip to tip and was as poor (?) as could be. I hope I will have no more such visitors. I saved my Turkeys all the same. Mr. Foster wanted you to put a note of this in the Astorian and wanted you to see if there was any bounty on killing such. If so, what he must do to secure the bounty. Excuse us for bothering you. I would like ever so much to have you and your wife to visit us.

Do you ever see my girls? Tell them to be good girls.

Give my regards to all my friends out there. Please answer this. As ever, your friend.

Mrs. W. A. Foster

The Tweedle Family

IN OCTOBER OF 1993, Helen Gaston and the Editor visited Ethelyn Tweedle Vaale at the home of her niece Carol Holmes Seppa and recorded some of her reminiscences. Eth, as she is generally known, was born in 1897 and grew up in the Nehalem Valley near the town of Elsie, the daughter of David and Ellen (Nellie) Julia Corcoran Tweedle. Eth appears in the photographs accompanying this article.

My father was David Tweedle who was born in Wisconsin. My mother was Ellen Julia Corcoran who was always called Nellie. She was Tim Corcoran's sister. My grandmother and granddad [Tim Corcoran Sr. and his wife Julia Kylie] homesteaded on Cedar Flats. That photograph [See cover photograph] shows my grandfather and grandmother and either Tim or Jack. They lived in a shack with a dirt floor. Later, Mother had a homestead at Salmonberry on the Nehalem River and Dad took up a timber claim at Saddle Mountain. My parents were married on October 14, 1893 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Astoria.

When I was a little kid, we lived in a shanty. It was on the creek behind where our big house was [later]. It burned. Jack Lewis built Mother and Dad's house. That was about 1904 because Mid, Carol's mother, was six weeks old when Mother and Dad gave a house-warming. Their house was a stopping place for everyone. They never turned a tramp away. They had a table that seated twenty people.

My sister, Janie, died at sixteen. I think she had a ruptured appendix. It about broke my mother's and father's hearts when she died. Jack died at twenty-nine. He never married and was eleven years younger than I was.

Attending School

When I went to school, we had to cross the river in a dugout canoe or a rowboat, and there were only five pupils in the school. There was Bill Larson, Maggie Larson [Foster], Annie Larson, my sister, Janie, and me in that little school house. Then they built the Nehalem Valley bridge there where the grange hall is at Vinemaple. After that we had to walk across the bridge; there were no school buses. The teachers always lived at our house. They paid Mother \$15 a month. The teachers never wanted to stay very long; it was so far out in the country. One of my teachers was Miss Elva Orr. She was from Long Beach. She lived with my parents. We went to school in the summertime for three months [June, July and August] on account of the high water in the winter. We had a big old wood stove and the teacher had to light a fire in the morning. We went out and played ball, just the five of us. We had a big blackboard and used chalk. We used slate boards and tablets, but tablets cost money and we had to go 35 miles to get them so we didn't use them often. The kids today don't know how lucky they are. We had pens and pencils and primers. We had ink wells in the corner of the desks which had double seats. Annie Larson and I used to sit together and if

I got in trouble, the teacher would put me to sit with old Bill and I'd pinch him. It's a wonder he didn't murder us. I never did go to high school; they didn't have any out there. Jack [Tweedle] graduated from the Jewell High School. Some of the kids got a chance to go to high school in Astoria like the Corcoran kids; they just took out on their own, like Nick Kussman's wife who is a cousin of mine. My folks wouldn't let me go. My mother and dad were very strict with us.

My Dad, David Tweedle

We girls never worked in the garden. That was something Dad wouldn't allow. I learned to milk the cow, but he didn't know it. He went home one night and he said, "There's something wrong. The cow shouldn't be going dry, but she is." And so mother said, "Eth's been milking the cow for you." He was working fifteen or sixteen hours a day and then he had to do the chores afterward, so I would sneak down and milk the cow when I could. Course, I wouldn't milk the cow dry, but when he went down, there wasn't much left. He didn't believe in women working outside. We did work in the flower garden. I had the best Dad in the world, to tell you the truth. I was almost twenty-three when I got married and you'd think my dad was at my funeral instead of my wedding because he didn't want me to get married. I got married in 1919 the first time. The first one was ten years older than me and the second was ten years younger. If you ever get married again, marry a younger man! I had two good husbands. I'm around 96 years old. That's getting up there. I got married to my second husband in 1955 and was only married to him about four years. I was a widow. [Eth's first husband, Warren Freeman, died in a logging accident.] Warren was raised in Birkenfeld.

Isolation

We got to go to town about twice a year. Dad would go about every three months. They didn't have any road except for a mud road with deep ruts. We'd get up around four o'clock in the morning, then travel all day. Then we'd shop one day and he'd rest the horses, then we would go home the next. We'd stay with Oney's mother and dad. [Oney Kelly Camberg-See the Spring 1993 issue for her story by Helen Gaston.] Dad would go to town alone sometimes and he'd just guess my shoe size. I've had terrible trouble with my feet as a result.

The Neighbors

The Jacobsons [Ole and Rhoda] lived where the Golleruds lived later near the old cemetery at Elsie down on the river. She was a half-breed Indian and he was a Norwegian. We all used to have parties together. There was Mary Jacobson who married Bob Pope, also Carl, Louis, and Pete. We went to their home and they would put all us kids to bed, three to four of us in one bed. Mother used to go down there and stay for two or three days at a time just to visit and all us kids would go along. Dad stayed home. Then they came to our house and they brought all their kids. I remember Astor Anderson [Rhoda's brother]; he had only one arm. He had a post office at Jewell until he was caught filching the money.

The Community Hall

The hall was along the road. When it was first built it was between where Twomblys lived and where we lived. It was right along the road on the lower side. I went to a masquerade there one night and dressed as a fat woman and nearly died from the heat. There used to be alot of chickens stolen in the valley. The chicken thieves would find out who was at the dance at the hall, then they'd go to their homes and steal the



CCHS Photo #5388-187

Jack Corcoran holds his nephew, Jack Tweedle, on the front porch of the Dave Tweedle home at Elsie about 1914. He is seated between Mid and Dave Tweedle, Jr. Standing in the back from left to right, Eth Tweedle, Nellie Corcoran Tweedle (wife of Dave) and Sara Corcoran.



CCHS Photo #5383-187

The Tweedle family home at Elsie about 1915. Top row center, Jim Gallagher; middle row left, Jim Niemi; center, Dave Tweedle; girl, Eth Tweedle; girl in bottom row; Mid Tweedle; boy, Jack Tweedle; rest unknown. These wonderful, though somewhat damaged, photos are now preserved for the future at the CCHS Archives.



Nehalem Valley Neighbors on February 22, 1908. This gathering ^{on the} at left, Lars Askilsen; at right, Nathan Anderson; child behind him, Dave Tweedle Gallagher; woman in white blouse at center is Rhoda Jacobson; next right is Nell Jacobson, holding son, William; beside her is her husband, David Tweedle, Sr



Courtesy of Carol Holmes Seppa

on the kitchen porch of the David and Nellie Tweedle house includes: seated David Tweedle, Jr.; girl seated back left, Mary Jacobson; man far right in back, Jim Jacobson; Nellie Tweedle, holding hand of daughter, Mid; behind Nellie is Ole M. Jacobson Sr.

chickens. We had eight or nine chickens, Rhode Island Reds, one time and we went to a dance. When we went home, all that was left was one chicken that was under the chicken coop. The chicken thieves stole all the rest.

"Soak Alley" was an area between Tweedle Road and Jewell on the other side of the covered bridge. It was called "Soak Alley" because they made home

brew and moonshine and were drunk all the time.

When the Tillamook Burn was happening, Warren and one of the fellows that lived on Tweedle road stayed up all night keeping the water hoses on our house and put out spot fires. The next Christmas the Nehalem River flooded. The river went all the way up to the Ridderbush farm. ♦

Miscellaneous Data on the Tweedle Family

Census

The 1910 Federal Census for Oregon and the Nehalem Valley area lists the members of the Tweedle family. They were:

David 45 married 16 years, born in Wisconsin, parents born in England.

Ellen 35 born in Massachusetts, parents were born in Ireland.

Jane Olive 15 born in Oregon.

Ethelind Maude [Eth] 12 born in Oregon.

David 8 born in Oregon.

Ada E.E. [Mid] 5 born in Oregon.

John B. 1 year and 3 months old, born in Oregon

Homestead records

Homestead records for Oregon are on microfilm and can be ordered through any local Latter Day Saints' Church that has a Family History Center. Clatsop County homestead records are stored at the Astoria center on Niagara Street. These records show that:

David Tweedle applied for a homestead of 160 acres on July 22, 1892, in Section 27, Township 6 North, Range 8 West, and he proved up on it September 1, 1898, receiving certificate #5616. His homestead was about one

mile east of Saddle Mountain and thirteen miles straight north of his wife's claim.

Ellen J. Corcoran applied for a homestead of 138.36 acres on December 12, 1892 in Section 34 Township 4 North, Range 8 West, and proved up on it on March 2, 1897, receiving certificate #5022.

Journal of David Tweedle

Several pioneers in the Nehalem Valley kept journals detailing daily activities as they began the difficult work of homesteading. Carol Holmes Seppa is fortunate to have the journal of her grandfather, David Tweedle, which begins January 2, 1892. The first couple entries read:

Commenced my diary living on SE 1/4 of Section 4, Township 6 North, Range 8 West. Prescott here on a visit. Harry and I sawed wood and Prescott went home.

....Matt came. A fine day. Went to the landing. Stopped at Kamms all night. I went to town with Harry for provisions. I went to the theatre to see John L. Sullivan.

Emanuel Episcopal Church

By Myrtle Johnston Slanger

DOWN IN THE NEHALEM Valley below Birkenfeld in the area known as Vesper, on the hill above the Nehalem River stands a little church among the fir trees. Emanuel Episcopal Church celebrated its golden anniversary and is now seventy-five years old. The church was moved not far from the original location due to big highway and bridge construction.

The church organization dates back to 1875 when Mr. and Mrs. William Johnston arrived in the Nehalem Valley. They earlier migrated to the United States from Northern Ireland. She had been born in Ireland, but he originally came from England. They first settled in Woodburn, Massachusetts and then moved on to Minnesota. Later they traveled to Portland, Oregon where they spent a winter before coming to the Nehalem Valley. They arrived by boat at Wood's Landing, now known as Woodson, in Columbia County. They had to walk about ten miles over the old trail to a homestead where Mr. Johnston later obtained permission from the government of Oregon to name the community, Vesper. The trail from Woods Landing brought many of the original pioneers into the Nehalem Valley.

After the Johnstons arrived in the valley, Mr. Johnston held regular Sunday church services for his growing family in their home. A little later, the services were moved from the home to a little log school house near Nelson Creek by the Nehalem River. Reverend William E. Short was coming out of Astoria for services once a year. Mr.

Johnston would meet the rector with his horse and buggy at Wood's Landing and bring him to our home. Reverend Short spent Sunday with the Johnstons family. He would leave for his journey back to Astoria on Mondays.

In 1914, William Johnston, his wife, Ellen, and their family, John, William, Andrew, Thomas, Marjorie, Fannie and son-in-law, William Rosenberg, Martha's husband, assisted in the construction of the small chapel. The interior and general layout work was done by L.P. Matthews who lived nearby. Upon entering the church, one can see that the finished work was fashioned by a skilled craftsman. The church was completed in 1915 and was consecrated that year by Bishop Walter Taylor Sumner and Archdeacon H.D. Chambers of the Diocese of Oregon and together they performed this special service.

This is the only chapel given to the Diocese of Oregon completely free of debt.

A tiny pump organ, brought over the trail from Wood's Landing, provided the music for the family and for services in the family home and the school house. It was then used in the new chapel until about 1922 when a larger pump organ presented by Martha, John, and William Johnston was provided. The tiny antique is now owned by one of the Johnston great granddaughters, Patricia Coursey of Portland. There is known to be only one other such organ like it in the state of Oregon. Arch-deacon H.D. Chambers

donated the bell, a historical relic even at that time. A stained glass window, in memory of departed members, was given to the church by Mr. and Mrs. William Johnston.

Jenny Louise Johnston, wife of Thomas Johnston, served as organist during her lifetime. William Rosenberg was caretaker from the time the church was built until his death in 1947.

Down through the years, physical changes have taken place within the church. The church was built before electricity came into the valley and kerosene lamps and candles were used until the 50th Anniversary when the church had electricity installed.

The little church, which had been a place for worship, weddings, baptisms, funerals and confirmations, was

warmed by a little wood-stove, stoked carefully for many years. It was removed about eight years before the fifty-year anniversary and an oil stove replaced it. The oil stove was a gift from Mrs. John Johnston.

Emanuel Episcopal Church used to hold services only on fifth Sundays, but had Sunday School on every Sunday. The ministers would come out on Saturdays staying with families. Services started at 10 a.m. on Sunday, followed by a picnic lunch, then services until 2 p.m. Later, they were held every 3rd Sunday in the afternoon at 2 p.m. with a minister, Reverend Carl Gross, and others from Astoria. It is hoped that the quaint little chapel will still be there for at least another fifty years. It is proof that a living faith produces tangible results. Services are now held every Sunday at 9 a.m.

A Visit with Ruby Johnston Corcoran and Myrtle Johnston Slanger

Story of the Johnston Family

IN NOVEMBER of 1993, Myrtle Johnston Slanger, Helen Gaston and the Editor drove north to Raymond, Washington, to visit with Ruby Johnston Corcoran. Myrtle and Ruby are first cousins; their fathers were the sons of William and Ellen Johnston, early settlers of Vesper, a small town in the Nehalem Valley near the middle of Clatsop County's east border. From family history, talk led to the kind of memories some readers may also share.

Ruby Corcoran: Grandpa Johnston was born in Canada. He had been adopted by some Canadian people and meandered over to Massachusetts where he met Grandma through the church.

Myrtle Slanger: My grandfather was always a church worker.

Ruby Corcoran: Gramma was born in Ireland. Our fathers were born in Minnesota. They came to Portland. Then Grandpa left Grandma and the three children there, and he went to Woodland. Years ago, the stoves they had they could take apart and put together. Well, he had taken the stove apart and put it into a pack and took the trail that comes out by Wanstroms in the [Nehalem] Valley. He carried the stove into that property. It was all trees then, and he settled across from Nordstroms on the flat and built a house out of rails that he just made on his own. And then later he consulted with the Cahills and got that piece of ground that just burned, mainly to get the water rights. Above there is a spring. That was a problem with that property; there was no water, only rain water. It was

after Dad was gone that they drilled a well between the barn and house and they went about eighty or a hundred feet down. The last house on the property was built by Wanstrom. In the winter when the water comes up, it floods the whole land.

Myrtle Slinger: My grandfather was a wonderful, loving grandfather but he was stern in his way. There were ten children in the family. Two died of summer complaint.

Ruby Corcoran: I thought it was like a bad cold. They didn't have medication in those days. They always had alcohol in the family; that was medicine. I can remember Momma had us kids kneel down beside her when we had a bad cold or showing some kind of illness. She would give us a spoonful of straight alcohol. It was supposed to keep the bugs away. I don't know how she had the heart to do that.

Myrtle Slinger: It was your mother that always had a bag of asafoetida that you put around your neck in the winter.

Ruby Corcoran: Yeah, that stinking stuff that made you gag. That was terrible. [It was a gum-resin with a "fetid" smell of garlic.]

Myrtle Slinger: You carried it in a little bag with a string around your neck and I remember your mother made us some when I was staying with your family. I thought, "Do I have to wear it to school?" It got warm and had an atrocious smell. We also had a worm medicine, and you took that whether you had worms or not. That was to keep them away. They were little brown-orange tablets that you had to chew. That tasted horrid. You got that once a week. When my sister had scarlet fever, they gave her spirits of nitre. Mother dissolved it. We had

cherry bark and your mother put onions with it too. When I got the whooping cough so bad, that was what they gave me. The cherry bark does work on coughs, but you have to sweeten it. It is bitter, bitter. We got cascara in liquid form once a week whether you needed it or not. Cascara is a nasty tasting stuff. Mother always had dried cherry bark around the house in case we came down with a cold or a cough. She'd get some that she kept in a jar and she kept boiling and boiling it down till it was half; then it's real dark brown and you add the honey to it. Ruby's mother added onions to that. I think it was her mother who had onions and salt and put a weight on them and drank the juice of that. That stuck in my craw.

Schools

Myrtle Slinger: There was a school at Vesper on the Nelson Creek and one on the hill by Skeeter Johnson or August Johnson.

Ruby Corcoran: That was the original one where our fathers went.

Myrtle Slinger: That's all logged off now and the house has been burned down.

Ruby Corcoran: I went to school in District 34 just below Johnny Cahill's place, and then that district dissolved and shifted over to district 19 where our fathers went. That's where I finished school. It is the school house that looks so much like Vine Maple.

Annie Erickson was my mother. She was married to William Johnston, Jr. My husband was James Franklin Corcoran. James' father was Tim. My husband was a nephew of Nellie Corcoran Tweedle and a first cousin of Eth Tweedle Vaale, David and Jack Tweedle, and Mid Tweedle Holmes.

I was born on the homestead place of my grandfather in Jewell. I wanted to be a nurse and went to Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland. At first I took care of private patients through Good Sam. The first year we were married we lived in a small tent, but then we moved to the Corcoran place to take care of Jim's mother who had a stroke.

Gardens

Ruby Corcoran: We did not go much for lettuce; there was no head lettuce in my day. We grew tomatoes, but not like they do nowadays. We never grew green peppers. We had corn, pumpkins, and squash. Most people kept the seeds to plant. We had a pear tree and plenty of cherries, Royal Ann, and fresh apples all winter. We had a cellar that was in a bank (of a hill) and anything that was kept there was put near the back wall.

Myrtle Slinger: We had a place in the back of the barn, where the hay mow was and there was a big pit where we put the carrots. The potatoes were in the root cellar where the fruit was and you'd walk into a big dugout and around were shelves where you'd put your fruit jars, and the potatoes went on the ground. And up above where the loft was, that was always filled with hay in the summer and the apples were put up there and covered, and you had to move the hay to get the apples.

Clothing

Ruby Corcoran: Gramma had a spinning wheel and kept little fluffs of wool in a basket and she would spin these together. She would dye the yarn. We wore harnesses (garters) to hold up our socks. We wanted to go barefoot, but mama didn't want us to because she had gotten an infection in her foot and didn't want that to happen to us.

I did a lot of work for my dad. I was

his boy. He left early [died], only 47. He was cut by a circular saw from his navel to his back. I was only fifteen and mama depended on me. We had a hired man, but I had learned how things were supposed to be done and that was it.

Myrtle Slinger: In the biggest families generally the older boys went out to work logging. In the Camberg family, there were several older boys in the family and they gave the money to the older sisters that were working in Portland and they bought the clothes for the little ones. They came to school with all the fancy dresses with the drop waist lines and they had bobby socks before we did.

Helen Gaston: I can remember when we lived in Wisconsin, you'd wear your long underwear all week; it got pretty wrinkled and you'd would have to smooth those stockings out. In the spring of the year, we'd have to pull the long underwear way up so we wouldn't have those bulges.

Myrtle Slinger: You'd put those on after the first frost came. And the dresses were much longer than now.

Helen Gaston: It was way into May before we'd be allowed to take off our long stockings.

Myrtle Slinger: We got one pair of stockings a week generally, and we had one bath a week. There was a plank road to walk on to school, and when any vehicles had gone over it, there was a puddle where the dirt was all soft. We thought it was fun, when we got out of school, to jump on the end of the plank and watch the mud fly. If you got your socks dirty, you got a real lecture at home. ♦



Ruby Johnston Corcoran on the left and Myrtle Slinger on the right at Ruby's home in Raymond, Washington. They are first-cousins and granddaughters of William and Ellen Johnston, early pioneers to the Vesper area.

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CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Gronnel Family

BILL LARRIMORE HAS BEEN researching his ancestors, the Gronnells and the Spears, for several years. He recently provided the following information.

The Joseph Gronnel family came from Haukiputas in the Oulu province in Finland where the family name was Satalahti. Joseph assumed his wife's surname of Granlund when they were married there about 1862. The name was changed to Gronnel when they came to the United States. From church records in Haukiputas, Finland, Bill Larrimore obtained the following. Members are listed below. Bill's comments are added in parentheses.

Juuso (Joseph) Satalahti was born August 12, 1839; his wife Briita (Juho's daughter) Granlund. was born June 25, 1839. Their (first) six children were :

Born

Juho (John)	April 18, 1863
Kusti (Gustav)	June 30, 1865
Sofia (Sophia)	February 20, 1868
Pekka (Peter)	December 11, 1870
	(Died in Astoria in 1876)
Anna Lisa	August 10, 1871
	(Died in childhood)
Juuso (Joseph)	March 21, 1873
	(Died at Elsie 1879)

Joseph Gronnel came to the United States first and then sent for his wife and children. Each child left home carrying a bundle of clean clothes to change into on the way. The family arrived at Erie, Pennsylvania in the summer of 1873 and lived there nearly three years. (The year 1873 was an important one in the history of the Finns. This was the year that a party of Finns led by B.A. Seaborg came to

Oregon from Erie, Pennsylvania. We do not know yet how the Gronnells were associated with Seaborg.) One child of the Gronnells, Charles, was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, in September 1873. In the summer of 1876, the family moved to Astoria, living there about three years. Another child, Emma, was born in Astoria in 1878. The older children attended school there. The names of John and Sophie appear in a listing of the school's students in a newspaper from 1879. Sophie's grades were given, showing that she was near the top of her class. In 1879, the Gronnells moved onto a farm at Elsie. John and Gus worked on the farm and fished for salmon with their father. At Elsie, on March 16, 1880, Joseph and Brita Gronnel's last child, Henry, was born. In 1893 four family members filed for adjacent homesteads in that area (three of them women), in Township 4 North, Range 7 West. Sophia Gronnel filed on 160 acres in Section 9; Bertha (Brita) Gronnel (widow of Joseph) filed on 167.18 acres in Sections 4 and 9; Ida Gronnel, widow of John Gronnel, filed on 136.17 acres in Section 4 and Gustav Gronnel filed on 145.92 acres in Sections 4, 8 and 9. This made up a large portion of the area later known as Sports Acres near Highway 26.

John Gronnel married Ida Mattson in 1882. Their children were Sophia (Luukinen), Lennie, Joe, John and Winifred. He died when his rifle discharged while he was climbing over a fence. In 1894 his widow married William Niemi, a fisherman from Astoria. In 1891 Gustave Gronnel married Annie Spear, a teacher who was from Clifton. Their children were Ben, Evelyn Tom, and Rodney. He died



Courtesy of Bill Larrimore
Sophie Gronnel (1868-1955),
opera singer and homesteader

in 1919. Sophia never married. She lived for a time on the East Coast where she performed as an opera singer, then returned to the Nehalem Valley. She died April 22, 1955. Peter died as a

child in 1876 in Astoria. Joseph, known as "Little Joe," drowned in the Nehalem River on June 2, 1880. Charles never married and died on November 18, 1956. Emma died of typhoid pneumonia at Elsie on May 19, 1899. Henry married Lydia Tuomikoski in 1914 at Astoria. Their children were Hugo, Gail and Henry. He died April 2, 1957.

The patriarch of this family, Joseph Gronnel, died in an accident while falling a tree some time before 1890. He was buried in a small cemetery on the homestead near Elsie. There are three graves on the first knoll on the point of the hill behind the barn on the Ben Gronnel property. Bill Larrimore believes that Joseph, "Little Joe" and Emma are buried there. The mother, Brita Granlund, died on February 1, 1917 at Elsie and she is buried at the Elsie Cemetery.

Many of the descendants in this family still live in the area.

An Interview with Ben Gronnel

Bill Larrimore provided an audio tape containing an interview with Ben and Phyllis Gronnel that was taped about twenty years ago. Ben's story is first; the story of his wife, Phyllis, follows. Harold Dahl, the interviewer, began with an introduction:

[Ben Gronnel was one of the four children of Gus Gronnel. Ben's grandparents, Joseph and Brita Granlund Gronnel, arrived in Astoria in the 1870's over the old Military Road. They located on a homestead south of the present Highway 26 grade over the Nehalem River. Phyllis Gronnel arrived in 1917 and was employed as a teacher

near Vinemaple about three miles above the present bridge. They were married at Portland, Oregon. Their family included one son and three granddaughters.]

My granddad and his first two boys came into the Nehalem Valley first. The mother wouldn't come out here until they got a house built and a place cleared out so they could keep a cow. I think it was two years before they cleared up an acre or so [on what was later Sports Acres].

There was a settler there, Tom Haines, who came six or seven years

earlier. [According to the 1880 census and the marriage records, Tom Haines was a 52-year old farmer from Ohio; his wife, Elizabeth Kimberlin, 51, was from Kentucky.] He had a log house built and some land cleared. He had his bank in the house. He bored a hole in one log of the house with an auger. When he had a two-bits piece or four bits, he'd drop it in there and when he got enough saved up, once a year or two years, he'd go to town. Grandpa paid \$1400 for his improvements and 160 acres with five proved up on. He spent a lot of time chopping and slashing trees way off of his property on the hill where the sun shone. I don't think they knew where the property lines were. All these people around the Sports Acres area came up the old military road, including many Finnish families, such as the Kampys, Abrahamsons, and Isaacsons. The biggest part of the Finns were fishermen who fished on the Columbia, then they'd spend their money on groceries and come and clear land in the Valley all winter.

There was no way for the first settlers to make any money here. That road was too hard and tough to haul anything out that didn't pay a good price. The beef could go out [to Astoria] on the hoof. They didn't have to haul them out. They cleared the land with fire and hand tools. There were no big cats then, just a lot of sweat and labor. They'd dig down along in a big stump and start a fire in it and in about a month, the fire would burn it all out. They weren't here long before they had oxen or horses. My dad had a team of oxen before he had horses. He had a hop yard, too, a small yard of fifteen or twenty acres. Hops were about a dollar a pound when my father set up his hop yard in 1890. He dug it up in 1908 when hops got down to about eight cents and they couldn't come out even. Agents would come around and sell orchard trees.

Some of them were pretty scrubby. Haines must have had fifty to seventy-five trees. They must have fed the apples to the hogs. There wasn't much else they could do with them. The farmers dug root cellars in the hillsides where they stored their vegetables. The farmers all made hay. It was all handled loose.

Houses

The first houses that were built were usually made of split boards and shakes. The timber would split easily. They were just temporary houses for the first year or two. The Finns built real good log houses. There was a sawmill about thirty miles away and a lot of the settlers rafted their lumber down the river. The houses faced the river, then ended up with their backs to the roads when they were built.

Adams was one of the first old-timers that came up by the Humbug near where Oney's Tavern is now. He landed in here and burned a big tree out, dug the charcoal out and got big slabs of bark to cover the top and cut holes for smoke to go out. He lived that first winter on elk meat and smoked salmon. He might have lived in that tree for two or three years. Fellows in those days were lazy. They didn't care what kind of house they lived in. Sometimes the neighbors would come in to help build. They had old square nails, not wooden pegs. Some of the first settlers' houses had chimneys with holes about 4' x 4' built out of wood. I don't know what kept them from burning. They had no brick-making clay out here. Some had open hearths to cook on. Some settlers would carry in the light sheet-metal stoves, the Klondike. Those fellows didn't mind packing things out on their back. Old Andy Reiersen carried a hundred pound logging jack out here to clear land with, so a little item like a stove didn't amount to much.

Besides oxen, cows and horses, the old-timers had sheep; they carded wool and knitted. Some of them knitted their own underwear. There was one girl who always wore home-knit underwear all year. I don't know how she stood it all summer. Pretty scratchy and hot. They were Danes and pretty conservative. My dad got goats when I was about five or six years old. They were good to clear brush and blackberries. The cockelbur down on the river came on the goats. The deer carried the seed around. For a cash crop, they headed cows, sheep and pigs to town. One time the neighbors got together with a pig from this family and one from that until they had about a hundred to take to town. The first night they camped, the pigs got around them and they all scrambled home. The next time they got them on the other side of the bridge and the men slept on the bridge, to keep them from going home. The hog buyers in Astoria were Chinamen and there were a lot of butcher shops there, too.

Grocery Shopping

The settlers made one grocery trip a year and bought salt, sugar, coffee, flour and also kerosene in square cans that would leak sometimes and get on the flour. Finns hit the coffee pretty heavy. They got green coffee beans in 150 pound sacks. One of the families there got probably three sacks like that and then they would roast them and then grind them with a coffee grinder held between their knees. For a one-year order, they'd get twenty to thirty 50-pound sacks of flour, four hundred pounds of sugar, a couple three-hundred pounds of coffee, and several hundred pounds of salt, such a large amount because they used it to salt meat. They made vinegar out of apples. Their liquor they bought in town. They didn't make moonshine until much later. They didn't drink much because they couldn't just dash out and buy some; it was a two or

three-day trip to town. My dad always used to buy candy on these trips. I never saw an orange until I was twelve or fourteen. I must have been twenty-two when I first saw the ocean. My home was 23 to 24 miles air miles from the ocean; those were rough miles.

Entertainment

At hop picking times, there used to be a mail carrier that played the fiddle and there was a zither and sometimes there was an accordion player. They always had a great time; that was every night during hop picking time. The hop pickers stayed in cabins then. There was "upper town" close up by the barn, eight cabins, and down closer to the river were six more cabins. The single fellows slept in the barn in the haymow. The hop pickers were families from around here and people from town. They always had dances, (especially in winter) and they'd be packed in there so tight, in a quadrille there was just room enough to get through the figures they had. When they had a waltz or two-step, it would be like standing in a box, spinning around. They all had lots of fun. They stayed all night.

An old bachelor used to live up by Jewell. He never had any socks. He just wrapped his feet in burlap and shoved them in his boots. The roads were so muddy that by the time you'd get to town you'd be full of mud clear to the waist, so this fellow would pull his pants off, and when he got pretty near to Astoria where there was a creek on the hill before you'd get to town, he get into that and wash his legs, scrape the mud off and pull his pants on. Then he was pretty well dressed and looked respectable.

We did most of our hunting in December after it snowed; it was easier to find game then. There sure was lots of fish. The Finns who fished on the

Columbia always had pieces of net and they'd catch fish up here on the Nehalem when the steelhead began running. One old-timer had an old muzzle-loader, wounded an elk and the elk took off after him. You couldn't load these guns instantly. He got behind a tree; the elk chased him around quite a bit and then, when it would stop, he'd start to load his gun. He'd rattle that ramrod in there and the elk would hear it and get going again. He finally got it loaded so he stuck it around the tree and killed him then. They used to have a lot of old-time shooting matches, no fancy guns.

School

I went to school at a little old school house right across from the upper end of my place at the boundary line between the two ranches. When they built the school about 1900, the biggest part of the kids were on that side, but after I got going, the most were on this side. We had to cross the river in a boat. We never went more than about five months to school a year. They started after the river went down sometime in May when the kids could row across, until October before the water started rising. I remember one time we had a teacher who got so homesick in the first part of September that they had to let her go and that was all the school we

got that year. The teacher had to drag me to school when I first started. We used to spend all the time we could going swimming and sometimes even during school time, we'd get excused and go out, and there was always a lot of brush between the schoolhouse and the river. We'd go out and take a little swim, then go back to the school. My bookcase came out of that school. When we were little, we used slates and later had drawing tablets. Our chalk was harder than the modern chalk. We had good teachers. I read books when I was ten that you can't get kids to read today. We didn't have T.V. in those days.

A telephone company organized in 1911 and we had it until about 1928, but it was expensive to maintain and it was just two wires straight through, everybody on it, and when anybody started to call someone, the whole neighborhood would be on it and sometimes you'd have to tell them to hang up so there would be enough power to get through. It went through timber and was knocked out so many times with trees falling across it. They gave it up sometime in the 1920's. It wasn't until we got electricity in 1938 that we were connected up with the world again.

Phyllis Gronnel's Story

The first dance I attended was on the Meeker place and that's where I met Ben and he tried to persuade me to let him take me home. Of course, I didn't....We used to have parties and we played games. School teachers were a novelty. When I came here, there were two teachers at Vine Maple and we roomed together, so we kind of went around together. The people that owned the dance hall would put out sandwiches and coffee and cake. When

we went to dances at Birkenfeld, a family always put out a chicken supper at midnight. That was always appreciated because we never quit dancing until morning. The grange was organized during the depression. Folks in those days didn't go far, so we put on dances and feeds there. It really was a central meeting place.

It wasn't easy for a teacher to get a school. The teacher here knew I didn't

have a school. She wrote me and I came out on the train. The school was a tall building, two rooms, one on top of the other; that was to save roofing expense. I taught the first five grades and the other teacher had the other three and the first grade of high school. We had woodstoves. We didn't have lights, but we had small lamps when we had entertainment at night. If it got real dark on a rainy day and the children couldn't see too well, I'd take a book and stand by a window and read to them. When I taught here, it wasn't a summertime school anymore. We taught geography, history, arithmetic, reading and writing. I taught music in both rooms and the other teacher taught art. We had considerable classroom equipment because of timber taxes.

Random Memories of Phyllis Gronnel

They [Nehalem Valley settlers] grew as much of their food as possible. Staples were hauled by team and wagon or behind the saddle. The roads in winter were almost impassible because of the mud. Later puncheons were laid over the road. When they were dry, it sounded like running a stick along a picket fence when you drove over them. One other thing about the puncheon road: it was a great place for hornets to make a nest underneath. Woe to the team or person disturbing them.

Ben's father [Gus Gronnel] raised hops. This was a good cash crop. Evelyn and Ben didn't like the job of training the vines up the poles. Hop

pickers always had a good time. They made a bit of money and danced on split barn floors every night to the tunes on a fiddle. One man, Otto Owen from Astoria, said he came out just to pick out the girls' [picnic] baskets.

Much lumber was rafted down the river from Pittsburg Landing or Birkenfeld. This had to be done at high water, but not so high as not to get under the bridges. Ben brought down some lumber for our house. There were four men to a raft.

Some families washed at the river. They set up a boiler on the rocks, made a fire and had plenty of water to complete the job.

We had mail three times a week. Earlier than 1917, mail was just distributed on a bed in a home. This was near Elsie. People from Hamlet went there to get mail.

When Ben was small at school, he was drinking over the water-bucket and losing some. The teacher said: "Ben, do you drink over the bucket at home?" Ben answered: "No Ma'am, it's too high."

Ben had an ulcerated tooth. His Dad went into the shop and made a pair of forceps and pulled the tooth with no anesthesia. "How much pain can you stand," he asked his son.

One night a skunk got into the pork barrel, so Gus shot it. --Goodbye pork.

The Hop Crop

In October of 1903, when Gustave Gronnel shipped 80,000 pounds of hops to the Oregon Railway & Navigation wharf at Astoria, hops had been grown in America for 274 years and in Oregon for at least 54 years. Henry Weinhard, who arrived in Portland in 1857, and two years later bought Henry Saxer's brewery, purchased a large portion of this crop. Pioneers often carried the plants with them across the plains as a medium for growing yeast for bread. Downy mildew was mainly responsible for the decline of hops in Oregon.

Vine Maple School District 14

By Helen Gaston

The Vine Maple School District was first organized on February 11, 1878. Schools may have been taught there even earlier in the homes of the settlers before a district was officially established, according to former School Superintendent E.D. Towler in a letter he wrote to a researcher at the University of Oregon on February 21, 1959.

Some of the early school records are stored in the archives of the Clatsop County Historical Society at the Heritage Museum. The records from 1889 show John Larson, John Corcoran, and Andrew Olson served as directors of Vine Maple School District No. 14. In 1890, A.M. McKay was clerk of the school and the directors were W.E. Herrick, John Corcoran and Andrew Olson.

In the late 1880s the school year ran through the summer and the length varied depending on the weather. In 1892, it ran from May 2nd to November 5th; in 1893, from April 10th to August 15th, in 1894, from June 11th to September 1st; and in 1895, it ran from May 13th to August 2nd. By the 1920s, classes were held on a regular schedule from early fall through late spring.

Clatsop County school records show that in 1892, Miss Edith J. Jones taught at Vine Maple for six months and received \$40.00 per month. In 1893, Miss Sophia Gronnel taught four months and received \$45.00 per month. Miss Sarah Smalley taught in 1894 and 1895; Miss Lily Lewis in 1896 and

Amy M. Powell, in 1899.

Ethelyn M. "Eth" (Tweedle) Freeman Vaale entered Vine Maple School in 1906, graduating from the eighth grade in 1914. She remembers that there were only five students in school. Janie Tweedle, her sister, Bill Larson, Annie Larson and Maggie Larson. They went to the little school that is located in the back of the large school in the accompanying photograph [on page 39. See also Eth's reminiscences on page 18.]

The Vine Maple School that the Valley residents remember from the 1920s sat about sixty feet from Kline Creek and Highway 202, right across from where the old Nehalem Grange building still stands. Behind the two story school was a small building that was the original Vine Maple School. In the 1920s, it was used as a wood shed.

The new two-story school was about fifty feet wide and sixty feet long, with horizontal siding. It had a bell tower and a porch on the front. Inside, a stairway led to the upper floor. Each floor had a pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room. The bottom floor had first through fourth grades and the second floor had fifth through eighth grades.

There was a gymnasium at the back of the school by the 1930s. It was open on one side, and on rainy days the students played there. Basketball was a favorite. Each recess they would choose up sides to play. Baseball was also

popular. The field was on the north side of the school.

Margaret "Marge" (Malone) Lindberg remembers that the drinking water was in a bucket and that everyone drank from the same dipper. By 1933, there was running water, gravity-fed from Kline Creek to the upstairs of the school. Mary (Gaston) Daughterty remembers that each day two of the older students were selected to make hot chocolate. It was a sweet powdered chocolate that was mixed with milk and heated. Mary remembered eating chocolate by the spoonful, although it was against the rules. After lunch the same two students who made the chocolate washed the white porcelain mugs.

Lenore "Oney" (Kelly) Camberg was the school bus driver for the Vine Maple and the Elsie School Districts from 1927 to 1943. Her first year, she received \$35.00 a month and furnished the vehicle, a 1919 seven passenger Reo that belonged to her dad, William Kelly. She had the little kids sit in the laps of the big ones.

Once a year the County School Nurse would come out from Astoria and do eye exams, check teeth, weight and height. She also checked for lice which was a big problem.

Miss Kathrine Dooley came to Vine Maple in 1921 and was the principal through the 1920s. She was the teacher most of the students remembered. She lived with the Fred Popes. Miss Dooley taught fifth through eighth grades. She was a strict disciplinarian and used the ruler on the knuckles frequently. Until Miss Dooley came, the large farm boys had managed to scare off several teachers. Robert Gaston remembers two of the older boys fighting. Miss Dooley broke up the fight, then marched the boys up the stairs holding their ears high enough that the boys were barely walking on tip-toes. Once upstairs, they got the ruler applied to their backsides. When they got home that evening, their fathers made certain that the boys would remember to stay out of fights.

Other teachers remembered were Lois Smith, Ada (Humble) Camberg and Ruth Hagmeyer.

History of the Elsie School District

Elsie School District 24

by Helen Gaston

ACCORDING TO the 1954 records of Clatsop County School Superintendent E.D. Towler, the Elsie School District was organized on August 6, 1914. However, other records show that an H.M. Spencer taught at Elsie as early as 1894. The school building was located on the east side of Highway 26 about one-half mile south of Oney's Restaurant.

It was a one room school. Inside was a small library with a large table where

games such as jacks were played on cold and wet days. In the back of the room sat a large metal wood stove. It had a metal guard around it to keep the children from getting burned. There was a large clock that struck the hour. In one corner was a piano which the teacher would play as the children sang.

Each morning the students started the day with a salute to the flag and recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

In the 1930s, the district furnished writing tablets for the students. These had photographs of movie stars on the covers. Students eagerly used up their tablets to be able to get a new photograph of a movie star.

When it snowed, the school had a large sled that was brought out and used at recess on the hill in back of the school.

Each Christmas season, a program was presented to the families, which consisted of small plays and songs. Each child had his or her part and after the program, each was given a bag with an orange, nuts and hard candy. As electricity didn't come to Elsie until 1939, the school was lit with kerosene lamps for these programs.

Valentines Day was another special holiday when the students exchanged homemade valentines.

Mrs. Josephine Dow Raymond taught in the 1930s before Miss Katherine Dooley came to Elsie School. [Miss Dooley had taught at Vine Maple earlier.] She boarded with the Henry Gronnel family at Elsie. One of her students remembers that she always wore the same brown dress, and can still visualize her in it. She is wearing it in the accompanying photograph.

Rewards were given to students who received good grades. Chocolate coins wrapped in gold foil were given as incentives. My information comes from a person who said that she was so poor at math that she could never get any candy coins.

The old school building still stands today, but as the bar on the south end of Oney's Restaurant. When it was put up for bid, Oney Camberg won it by bidding \$700. It was moved across the road in 1948.◆

Earliest School in the Nehalem Valley

School first opened in the Nehalem Valley on Monday, May 18, 1874 with fifteen students attending. Isaac N. Foster was the first teacher. He had just moved from Marion County, Oregon, to homestead land near his brother, William Foster. Four years later, on May, 1878, windows and doors made for the new school were being hauled over the Nehalem Valley trail to the Fishhawk settlement, according to the newspaper. In 1878, there were two

school districts in the Nehalem Valley. See photograph on page 7. The officers for District 8 (Fishhawk or Jewell) were W.H. Lewis, W.A. Foster, David Johnson and Isaac N. Foster, clerk. They spent \$139.45 to operate the school (and probably build the new one). Officers for District 13 (Elsie-Vine Maple area) were Thomas Haines, J. Hobson, J.F. Kimberlin and S.V. Whitehead, clerk, no expenditures listed.



Courtesy of Carol Holmes Seppa

Vine Maple Schools, new and old, in 1918.



Courtesy of Oney Kelly Camberg

Elsie School Class of 1934. Left to right, top to bottom; Millie Rierson, Violet Rierson, Katherine Dooley (Teacher), Ruby Rierson, Ida Kampy, Elaine Hibbard, Katherine Medley, Delores Medley, Henry Kampy, Dorothy Medley, Frank Miller, Roy Medley, Veda Rierson, Priscilla Pierre, Goldie Palmer, ? Pierre, Donovan Hibbard.



CCHS Photo #5571-187
Bill Larson and Frank Smith falling a snag on Red Bluff Road for Clatsop County in 1915. Gordon Smith, son of Frank Smith, is the builder of the spectacular Morris' Camp 18 Restaurant and Logging Museum at Elsie.

The Ultimatum

By Gordon D. Kinney

ONE OF MY FATHER'S 1920s business ventures was called the Kinney Logging Company, located in Columbia County, Oregon. The nearest communities were Vernonia and Birkenfeld.

Unlike many small businesses of that time, my father's two hundred plus employees did not commute to work on a daily basis. As an alternative, he provided board and room through a monthly payroll deduction. This took the form of bunkhouses and mess halls. "Swampers" or janitors were hired to clean the sleeping quarters, and cooks and waiters were employed to cook for and feed the timber crews.

One of the major problems existing in a large camp of this type was keeping the employees contented. Disgruntled and unsatisfactory workers were continually leaving camp. My father used "word-of mouth" and help-wanted ads to attract job seekers. Since a large labor pool of skilled woodsmen existed at that time, my father could be very selective in his hiring procedure. On the other hand, picking up an experienced cook was always difficult.

One busy work day, the head cook informed my father that he was quitting the following day. Despite attractive offers of higher wages and shorter working hours, this cook adamantly refused to stay on. Desperate for a permanent cook, father immediately began his search for an adequate replacement. He knew that if a "floater" or inexperienced cook were

hired and botched the job, his crews would leave camp and hire on with a competitor, down the road.

Soon after the cook left, a miracle occurred. A married couple approached Dad in a nearby town and asked for work. Dad was overjoyed because she was a boarding house cook, catering to large numbers of railroad workers. Her husband was an experienced tree topper and high rigger, a job not coveted by many loggers. Both wished to settle down and become permanent employees.

A head cook's job was demanding. Loggers, at that time, were a peculiar breed of workmen regarding meals. They insisted, no, demanded, that the cooks provide new fare for lunch and dinner each working day of the week. Gargantuan breakfast meals, consisting of pancakes, eggs and bacon, would be served on a daily basis without complaint. But to repeat the same menu was a cardinal sin, particularly if leftovers were used. So it was no wonder that good cooks devoted long hours to the purchase of food supplies and the planning of large, nutritious meals.

Logging has always been an injury-prone profession. No matter what type of work he was involved in, the logger expected to be injured or killed at any moment during the work day. Rolling logs, falling trees and breaking cables all contributed to the high rate of accidents.

Although the faller, buckler, choker-setter, and whistle punk were listed as dangerous occupations, the tree-topper and high-rig operator were considered to be the most hazardous work of the logging industry. Once the tree was selected for topping and rigging of block and tackle gear, it was the job of the climber to strip the tree of all branches and cut off the top. This work required climbing spurs, leather safety belt and saw and axe. During the upward climb, he might easily slip and slide down the tree. Upon reaching the top, the climber could sever his belt with his axe or saw. If he was successful in cutting off the top, there was always the danger of the tree whiplashing as the severed section fell. A miscalculated cut and the top could fall onto the logger.

But the stripping and cutting of the spar tree was only the beginning of a long day for the climber. Now equipped with block and tackle, the high rigger secured the gear at the top of the tree. This intricate rigging provided linkage between the log boom (or "hayrack") attached to the tree, and the stationary steam engine (or "donkey" engine). These two pieces of equipment were used to haul in the logs deep in the woods and stack them at the base of the spar tree. Later, this system would be used to load the railroad cars.

All went smoothly at the camp for several months. Even the head cook and her husband seemed to be content. But suddenly one day, she demanded that my father transfer her husband to the woods as a faller or buckler. She told him that she dreamed about her spouse falling during one of his tree-topping jobs. She wanted him on the ground, safe. To back up her plea, she threatened to quit that very day. My disturbed father pleaded with her to reconsider, at least a day or two, until he could find a high-rigging replacement. She refused! So the heated discussion ended, with Dad giving into her demands.

The cook's husband was transferred to the woods and she remained in camp as the head cook. In a short time, a new tree topper and high rigger were hired.◆

Gordon D. Kinney's articles have also appeared in the Fall, 1992, and Spring and Summer, 1993 issues of Cumtux. He is currently researching John H. Smith, a former state senator from Clatsop County and a relative. For this reason, he would like to obtain copies of poetry that Smith wrote. If anyone has copies, the staff at the Heritage Museum will be glad to forward them on to him.

Communities and the Origin of their Names

Elsie - for Elsie Foster, named in 1892 by George Gragg, 1st postmaster
Mishawaka - for the town in Indiana, 1st postmaster in 1878, J. Kimberlin, p.m.
Vine Maple - for the shrub, opened about 1891, closed about 1902 to Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids - post office established in 1892
Jewell - for Marshall Jewell, P.M. General, in 1874, W.H. Kirkpatrick, p.m.
Medley - for William Medley, 1st and only p.m., established in 1890
Denver - for William J. Denver, p.m., established 1884, closed 1888
Vesper - for the evening star, established 1879 by William Johnston, closed 1919
Fish Hawk - for the bird, established in 1917, Florence Bennett, p.m., closed 1917
Hopkins - for Thomas Hopkins, 1st p.m., established in 1890, closed 1902

The Wage - Peschl House



Courtesy of Phyllis Hayrynen & Joanne Baker

The Peschl Family. Standing: Phyllis Peschl Hayrynen; seated, from left to right: Audrey Moberg Cameron, Diane Peschl Lane, Joanne Peschl Baker, Joseph Peschl, and Herman Peschl.

Five miles north of Jewell near Highway 202 was where this old house stood for nearly a hundred years, for years, the oldest in the valley. It was built by Peter Wage, who was born in Norway in 1856 and immigrated to the United States in 1888. Wage and his Oregon-born wife, Julia, were parents of Ollie (a daughter), William, Mary, Arnie, Martin, James Elmer and Dewey, according to the 1900 federal census. William Wage married Evelyn Gronnel in 1920. Peter Wage was the builder and proprietor of a grist mill on Fishhawk Creek. He sold out to William Medley, and moved on to Alberta, Canada, in 1904. See the article, "A Search for an Old Grist Mill," by Evelyn Hankel in the Winter, 1981, issue of *Cumtux* on sale at the Heritage Center.

The Peschl family bought the house from the Medleys. The children in the photograph above, dating to about 1946, belong to the third and fourth generation of families that came to Clatsop County in the 1880s. Their great-grandparents, Samuel Banich and Anna Berrio married in Astoria in 1883 and lived in Alderbrook. It was the girls' great grandfather's brother who owned the property, Ignatz Peschl, affectionately known as Nazzie. His brother, Joseph, great grandfather of the girls, was born in 1839 and married Tekla Banich. They had five sons, Louis, Herman, Frank, Charles, John and August and one daughter, Mrs. J.F. Gilpin.

The pioneer Wage-Peschl house burned to the ground in May of 1978.

Nehalem Valley Youth



CCHS # 89.187.16

Back row, left to right: Alfred Coupat (Frenchie), John Agren, Jalmar Niemi, Jessie Smith and Albert Martin.

Front row: Robert Denver, John Gronnel and Carl Jacobson.

These eight young men posed for this photograph in late November of 1917 to commemorate their entry into the army where they were to be attached to the Forestry Service. Less than three months later, Robert Denver was dead, the first Clatsop County serviceman to die in World War I.

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